Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PANAMA 04460 212010Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ICA-11 SAB-02 HA-05 IO-13 AF-10
EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03
PA-01 /103 W
----------014033 220257Z /70
R 212005Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7628
INFO USINT HAVANA

S E C R E T PANAMA 04460

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PN, CUL, PINT, XX, CU
SUBJECT: WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL

REF: A. STATE 084164, B. PANAMA A-009, C. STATE 4259

1. WE ESTIMATE THAT BETWEEN 200 AND 400 PANAMANIANS WILL ATTEND THE XI WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL, AND THAT SOME 800 DELEGATES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WILL BE TRANSSHIPPED THROUGH PANAMA TO CUBA.
2. PANAMA'S PREPARATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE XI WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL IN HAVANA SEEMED TO BE WELL UNDERWAY, BUT MAY NOW BE AFFECTED BY THE CLOSING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA (UP) IN THE WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S STUDENT DISTURBANCES (REF C). THE UP HAS BEEN ONE OF THE FOCAL POINTS FOR ORGANIZING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL. IT WAS THE SITE OF A JUNE 8 PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY ALAN GRESH, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE FESTIVAL, THE RECTOR AND ACADEMIC VICE-RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO PANAMA. (THE UP IS CLOSED FOR AN "INDEFINITE" PERIOD. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION IN THE PRESS THAT IT MIGHT NOT RE-OPEN UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SEMESTER IN AUGUST.)

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 04460 212010Z

3. IN ADDITION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PANAMANIAN NATIONAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE LISTED REF B, DR. ROLANDO MURGAS, LAWYER AND FORMER MINISTER OF LABOR, HAS APPARENTLY BEEN NAMED AS THE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT AND SPOKE AT THE UP MEETING. IN HIS SPEECH, HE SAID PANAMANIANS ARE OBLIGED TO "DRAW CLOSE TO" THE CUBAN PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE SUPPORTED PANAMA'S CAUSE OF NATIONAL

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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

LIBERATION. LIKEWISE WITH THE "YOUTH OF ALL NATIONALITIES" WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN THE PANAMANIAN CAUSE. HE MADE PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE YOUTH FROM SOME COUNTRIES WHOSE ATTENDANCE AT THE FESTIVAL WILL BE CONSIDERED "SUBVERSIVE", AND URGED SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY FOR THEM. WE HAVE HAD INDICATIONS THAT THE GOP WILL SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL THROUGH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, BY PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO DELEGATES, AND THROUGH AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY TRAVEL TO CUBA IS NOT REFLECTED IN DELEGATES' PASSPORTS (IN ORDER TO AVOID POSSIBLE HARRASSMENT IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES). MOORE

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